

# Agents and Angels

by Sheryl Nantus

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Summary: (Touched by An Angel/X-Files crossover) A heavenly visitation brings out the fears...

## 1. Default Chapter Title

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My mother insists on watching one show before The Show; and since she's still bigger than me, she gets it. So I watch it. And I started to like it. And then I thought about taking out the commercials and switching networks. Talk about extremes...

Credits: Tess, Monica and Andrew are from the wonderful CBS television series "Touched By An Angel" - and I hope I managed to do an adequate job in portraying them... in short, they're angels... grin... and they try to help people...

Jackie, well... she's still mine... tho I keep trying to lock her out... but then she kicks the door in... sigh...

Summary: A heavenly visitation brings to the surface worries and fears. Rating: G, Story... probably paranormal for the simple fact that I have angels in it... snicker... Spoilers: Memento Mori spoilers, natch...

Agents and Angels (1/3)(X Files/TBAA Crossover)by Sheryl Martin

Walter Skinner strode along the hallway; nodding automatically at the other agents as they gave him a respectful glance or shake of the head. His eyes didn't leave the open folder in his hand; nor did he

slow his pace until he reached the open viewing bay above the gymnasium.

Taking a deep breath, he closed the folder and pinched the bridge of his nose; pushing his glasses up in the process. Assistant Director might be fun in name; but it meant more trouble than anyone ever knew. And there were plenty of days when he wondered why he had ever wanted any more responsibility than he had as a junior agent; clocking in and out at regular hours.

Looking down onto the floor, he frowned. Off to one corner on the practise mats stood two women; putting on protective equipment in preparation for a sparring match. One sported a Quantico sweatshirt over her grey track pants; the other a bright blue Toronto Blue Jays shirt to go with her black sweats.

He recognised them immediately.

Scully.

And St. George, their Canadian friend.

The shorter of the two women reached for the red padded mitts, slipping them over her hands. The foot protectors were already on; along with the thick padded head protectors. The other woman turned to one side, discreetly slipping a mouthpiece in; then turning back to face her opponent. With a wave of her own padded hands, she urged her on.

He watched approvingly for a few minutes as Scully launched a basic set of attacks; aiming for St. George's side and torso area, kicks and punches in a seasoned flurry of activity. For her part, the Canadian wasn't returning anything heavy, just the usual blocks and deterrents.

"Sir? I heard that you wanted to see me?" The voice startled Skinner; a small reprimanding voice in the back of his mind berating him for letting Mulder sneak up on him like that.

"Yes." Turning away from the window, he handed Mulder the folder. "I think you need to rethink this report. At least before I submit it to higher approval."

With a snort of disgust Mulder took it; slamming it down by his side. "They just don't ever want the truth, do they? They only want the truth as they want to see it." He glanced at the window. "Anything interesting?" His voice trailed up; as if secretly thrilled at catching Skinner doing anything as nefarious as watching women at play.

"Scully." The one word brought Mulder to full alertness. "How has she been feeling lately?"

The tall man shrugged. "As good as she ever has. Some good days, some bad days." He looked down onto the floor. "She's giving St. George a good beating, isn't she?"

Skinner nodded. "And you know that's not likely unless she's giving Scully the opening for some reason."

Jackie St. George winced as the padded foot slammed into her left side again. There was definitely going to be a need for a hot bath tonight. Maybe the Wookie would oblige and help out again...

Wham!

She chuckled, shaking her head where the blow had landed. That's what you get for thinking too much, Jackie. If it hadn't been for the special mouthpiece, Dana Scully would be in a helluva spot right now.

The punch came in, easily blocked. But the Canadian frowned, seeing a problem in her opponent's technique.

Not that there was anything wrong. But she was getting stronger, not weaker.

For her part, Scully was just warming up. Taking a deep breath and ignoring the pounding pain in her head, she unleashed another flurry of blows; enjoying the sweat as it ran down her back and pooled at the base of her spine.

"What do you see?" The Africian-American woman sat quietly on the bench to the left of the sparring mats; looking at her protege.

Brushing some of the long red hair out of her face, Monica stared at the pair intently before speaking; her Irish accent thick and calming. "Two women having some practise. Although I never understood what beating each other up was all about..."

"Look closer." Tess demanded, her eyes intense and deep.

"She's not really doing much to fight back, is she?" Lifting a hand, Monica waved at St. George, who was presently being pushed back by a series of blows. "I thought the idea of practise was to let both people get a chance of improving themselves."

"Exactly." The older woman nodded. "And..."

"She's losing control?" Monica looked to Tess for approval and finding it. "She's not fighting properly..."

"She's losing control." Skinner mumbled under his breath. The two men had stood silently at the viewing window, taking in the sight with a unmentioned degree of interest at seeing the two women spar.

Mulder frowned. "Scully's really giving her a beating..."

Suddenly the petite redhead swung a roundhouse punch; connecting cleanly with St. George's jaw. With a grunt she dropped to the ground, shaking her head as the padding took most of the sting away. Putting up her hands in surrender, she spat out the mouthpiece.

"Man, Dana... take it easy on me, hmm? I'm not..." She stopped, seeing her friend start to waver back and forth on unsteady legs. "Dana?"

Scully pulled off her head protector with shaking hands, tossing the

mitts to one side. Then she fell to her knees, rolling onto the mat with the limpness of exhaustion.

"I'll call for..." Skinner turned towards the other agent only to find him already sprinting down the corridor towards the stairwell. Yanking his vision back to the gym; the older man could see the scarlet trail under her nose from where he stood.

"She's sick." Monica said quietly as the tall man dashed across the floor; dropping to his knees and cradling the fallen woman.

"That's obvious." Tess snorted. St. George had pulled off her own equipment and was now kneeling by the unconscious Scully, panic written on her face.

"But we aren't here to heal her, are we?"

"No. That's God's choice, not ours. We're here to do something more important."

"What's that?"

"Give them faith to keep going." Tess gestured to the trio on the dark blue mats. "Because right now they're all very mad and frustrated - and something's got to give."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Sir..."

"Agent Scully, I'm not open for discussion on this topic." Skinner paced back and forth in front of the small first aid room. The nurse on call had discreetly left them after seeing the Assistant Director's face.

"I'm fine." Swinging her feet off the small cot, the woman got to her feet. "I just got overworked out there."

"And just about gave Agent Mulder and myself a heart attack. Not to mention what St. George would have done if you had died out there." His voice rose in intensity. "Three days bed rest. At home. And I'm ordering a home care nurse through the medical insurance to make sure that you're fine."

"I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself." The flush rose to Scully's cheeks, and she flared at the man. "I've been doing fine for weeks, and I don't see how any nurse..."

"Agent Scully, I don't think you appreciate my position." Skinner ground his teeth together as he spoke. "If you don't allow this small infringement on your life I will be forced to take it to higher authorities and inform them of your medical condition. This way I can put you back in the field in one week; with Mulder. If you make me tell anyone else you might never work in the basement again." He stopped and stared at her. "Your choice."

Gritting her teeth, the redhead nodded. "Three days."

Skinner nodded. "And no one knows anything. I'll mark it off as used sick days and vacation time."

"Yes sir." Spitting out the words, she got to her feet and strode past him.

"Scully?" He caught her as she entered the hall, making her stop and look back. With a slight sense of embarrassment, the older man looked at the floor before meeting her gaze again. "You looked good out there. And I just want to make sure that you keep looking good. For a long time."

"Yes, sir." Her tone softened. "Thank you, sir."

\*\*\*\*\*

Wrapping the thick terrycloth robe around her, Dana padded out to the kitchen; plugging the kettle in for some herbal tea. A hot shower had eased most of the pain out of her strained muscles and washed away the dried blood from her upper lip.

Biting her lower lip, she thought over Skinner's words; admitting to herself that he was right.

She had to be more careful.

The least of which being playing on the gym floor. She wished she could blame it on St. George, but she had been the one to suggest a workout; her Canadian friend agreeing out of a combination of guilt and worry and a need to make sure Dana Scully was happy.

Of course, now she had all three of them upset and worried. Mulder had disappeared back to his office, mumbling something about visiting her later. And Skinner had sent St. George back to the Canadian Embassy so fast that her equipment was probably still sitting on the floor. Probably to avoid her making a scene.

Not that Skinner wasn't frantic enough for all of them.

Dipping the tea bag in the cup of hot water, she ruminated on why she had lashed out at the woman; disregarding her own safety for the sake of working out her pain and frustration. This wasn't in the field; no one would have minded if she had just stopped. Out there it was for real and she wanted to be out there with her partner.

So why had she almost killed herself in the gym?

The gentle knock shattered her introspective wanderings. Making her way to the door; she peered through the spy hole.

A woman.

Must be that dammed home care thing Skinner had told her about.

With a tired sigh, the redhead opened the door.

"You must be Dana." The young woman extended a hand, smiling broadly. Her voice held the Irish accent that reminded Scully automatically of her father, although he hadn't been the original Scully to come over. "My name is Monica."

\*\*\*\*\*

For one of the few times in his life, Fox Mulder was truly embarrassed with himself. And it felt extremely bad.

He had put himself into situations where he knew he would be held up to ridicule; joked at and scoffed, his nickname "Spooky" tossed around like a badge to label his theories and his beliefs as outlandish and strange. But he hadn't ever felt embarrassed for holding those thoughts and theories. Instead he fought back and was usually proven right, to a degree. And that negated any feelings of exposure or shame.

But this was different. For some reason he felt so totally blackened by the shame of not being with Scully right now that he could barely keep his head up.

He knew she was fine; knew that Skinner had seen to that. But he hadn't been there in the nurses' office; babbling something about having to check on her purse and wandering down the corridor when she walked out. He remembered saying something about checking in on her later, before he bolted for the basement office and sanctuary.

She had been hurt. He had seen it in her eyes.

And she was right. He had left her at the worst possible time. Not for the sake of a case or for following up on a clue or anything like that. He had just been too scared to see her.

He closed his eyes.

He was afraid.

So afraid of losing her that he almost couldn't stand to see her sometimes; his mind imagining that desk being permanently vacant.

The file on his desk listed possible alternative medical theories for dealing with her ailment. But he knew she'd scoff at most of them. Mind you, so did he.

But it was a start.

The sharp rap on the doorframe startled him. Looking up, he stared at the heavyset African-American woman standing in front of him; her hands crossed in front of her. A touch of white in her hair showed that she was definitely older than he was.

"Fox Mulder?" She shook his hand hard. "I'm Tess. I've been assigned to do your audit from Internal Affairs over the next week or so."

He blinked. "Audit?" The word croaked through tight lips.

"It seems that you've had a few... discrepancies in your finances and the receipts submitted. Assistant Director Skinner thought that over the next little while you would be available to work with me to scout out the irregularities." Her eyes bored into his. "I assume you won't be busy doing anything else?"

Mulder swallowed. "Ah... not now."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Can I get you some coffee?" Scully walked into the kitchen, reaching for a mug. The slender woman sat at the table, smiling.

"I don't suppose you'd have an espresso machine?" Her voice lilted up optimistically, then fell as the redhead chuckled.

"Can't say that I do." She reached for the coffeemaker, flipping the switch on. "I've been too busy to worry about caffeine."

"Well, I've tried to cut down to a cup a day. But it's hard." Monica admitted.

"I see." Walking around the table, the woman sat opposite her. "Look, Monica... I don't know how much you were told about me, but I'm willing to just sign your timesheet and let you go on your way - just drop by every morning and then take a vacation." Sitting back in her chair, Dana sighed. "I don't even know why Skinner did this."

"Well, I can't do that." Monica smiled. "See, that would be lying, and I can't do that. I'm assigned to come in and spend every day with you; or at least six hours. Even if that's only to watch television with you; or go to the park or to the hospital, that's my job." She could see the resentment on Dana's face. "And I know that you're very ill. And your work in the Bureau. I was fully briefed before I came over."

"Oh." Dana couldn't think of a suitable retort. Instead, she got to her feet and headed for the coffeemaker. "So you're saying that I'm stuck with you no matter what?"

"I don't like to think of it as 'being stuck with'. Let's call it 'getting to know each other'."

"Do you know what I have?" Scully put it plainly. "I have..." Her throat closed up on her. "I have a terminal illness, possibly. And I don't like being forced to rest like this. I have work to do."

"And so do I." The woman returned just as forcibly. "Why don't we try to do both our jobs?"

With a shake of her head Dana handed Monica the mug of coffee.

The phone rang, breaking the tension. Picking up the receiver, Scully smiled at the familiar voice.

"Hey, woman - I was thinking about getting some Jackie Chan films and improving on your technique - how about I come over..." St. George's voice was calm, but strained.

"Ah... not tonight." Scully turned and looked at the seated woman. "I've got company."

"Mulder beat me there already?"

"No, the home care nurse." Dana could feel the tension coming off the

phone in waves. "She's been sent by Skinner to take care of me for the next little while."

"I thought I was going to do that." Jackie's voice sounded hurt. "I mean, Rosie's out of town visiting her relatives in California, and Marty said that he wouldn't mind..."

"It's okay." Scully forced a smile onto her face. "You don't get enough time with him as it is; and Skinner put this as part of my getting back on duty full-time. And Monica seems determined to follow through with this." The subject of her sentence nodded in agreement.

Jackie paused, then continued with obvious worry. "Is she okay?"

Dana knew what she meant. "She's been cleared through the Bureau."

"That doesn't mean anything to me."

"I'll call you later; promise. And I'll be fine."

"Okay." She grumbled. "Just call if she's doing anything strange. I'll run her through Interpol and our databases. And give her to the Gunmen if I have to."

"Fine. I'll talk to you later." Hanging up the phone, Dana turned to Monica and tried to smile. "Jackie's a bit suspicious of new people."

"She's just being a good friend. And I can't blame her. I've had a few experiences where things weren't as they seem either."

\*\*\*\*\*

Mulder felt like someone was slowly extracting his brain through his nasal cavities. And it wasn't getting any better. Getting to his feet slowly from where he had been crouching over the bottom drawer of the file cabinet, he handed a thick folder to the woman sitting behind the desk. What used to be his desk.

"There's the last of them." Mulder paused. "I know you've got clearance for the files here, but I have to warn you that you might find some of our cases rather... unusual."

Tess looked at him sternly. "Are you insinuating that I might not believe some of the work you and your partner have done?"

"No..."

"Then why assume that I wouldn't believe you?"

"Because..." He sputtered, suddenly selfaware. "Because not many people do."

"Well, I'm not 'many people'." She snorted. "And you're not the only one who has seen odd things, Agent Mulder." Looking at her watch, she got to her feet. "I'm out of here for the day. I'll expect you back here in the morning to continue the review."



"Right." Mulder muttered, grateful to get his seat back. "See you then."

"Yes." Tess swept out the door in a graceful movement unlike any woman he had ever met. Not that he had ever met a woman like her. Suppressing a shudder, he looked at the time.

He barely had time to make it to Scully's and then home - pick up some pizza on the way so he wouldn't have to deal with the disaster commonly referred to as his kitchen.

And then another day without Scully.

This was going to be hell.

\*\*\*\*\*

Marty approached the apartment, whistling a jaunty tune. A whole week in town had been hard to arrange, but he had managed it. Jackie must have been tied up at work to not be there at the airport, but that didn't surprise him. There wasn't much left about his fiance that did. Taking the keys out of his pocket, he paused at the door.

Inside he heard the ominous sounds of crashing and cursing; the thick thump of books falling and the tinkle of broken glass.

Either she was very, very upset or she was being robbed. And if the latter, then they better head for the Mexican border before they got caught. Suddenly the sounds disappeared. Slipping his key in the lock, he cautiously opened the door, peering around the corner.

In a word, the apartment was trashed. The two bookcases had been pulled away from the wall; the contents strewn across the floor amid the shatter remains of what might have been coffee mugs or plates or something.

And off in the far corner, curled up in a ball and sobbing, sat St. George.

Gingerly making his way through the disaster area, he knelt by her; brushing away the long hair where it had stuck to her wet skin.

"What's up?" He whispered, his voice betraying his worry.

"Dana..." She put the palm of her hand to her forehead, sniffing. "We were sparring, and..."

"You were what?" His voice rose a few octaves in shock. "I didn't think she was up to that - you know..."

"She isn't. Wasn't." The woman sniffled again. "She asked me to let her do a workout, and I let her do it all - didn't work her half as hard as I could have. Just took the shots."

"I see." He ran a finger down her exposed side; along the purple/black bruise extending under the sweatshirt. "I'm assuming there's plenty more of these."

"She... nosebleed..." Jackie's voice trailed off as she mumbled. "Okay now, but it was still scary..." Suddenly an arm lashed out, slamming into the wall with intense force. Marty flinched as the fist withdrew slowly; leaving a deep hole in the wall. "I shouldn't have done it."

"Love, you can't control Scully. Hell, Mulder can't do it and he's been with her longer." This forced a chuckle from the distraught woman. "You know what you need?"

A bout of giggles hit St. George; her hands over her face as she chortled.

"You've been hanging around Mulder too long." He said accusingly. "I'll run a bubble bath and while you're in soaking I'll reassemble your living room. And order the pizza."

"I can't lose her, Marty." She pulled her hands away from her face, suddenly serious. "Everything I care about keeps being taken from me. Everything."

"Not me." He ran a finger down her cheek. Getting to his feet, he headed for the bathroom.

"Not yet." She stared after him, whispering to the empty room.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mulder rapped gently at the door, checking his watch again. It was late, but they had never lived in real time before.

"Mulder, it's late." She chuckled, looking at the pizza box he balanced precariously in his hands. "And I've already eaten."

"More for me, then." He walked past her. "So... feeling better?"

"I'm fine." Crossing her arms in front of her, she shrugged. "Skinner sent over a home care nurse."

"You're kidding." Mulder said through a mouthful of pepperoni. "For you?"

Scully nodded, sitting down opposite him and entwining her fingers. "Part of the deal to have me get back into the field. He's being careful."

"Well, one of us has to be." He mumbled before swallowing. "Want to tell me what the hell that sparring match was all about?"

"I was just..." She swiped at a loose red lock hanging just at the edge of one eye. "I just wanted to work out and Jackie said that she'd play punching bag for me..."

"And you scared the hell out of her and Skinner."

Getting to her feet, she paced back and forth. "Mulder, it had nothing to do with you or Skinner or even St. George. I just need to

see what my limits are and then see if I can keep pushing them. I have to be able to hold my own out there with you."

"No, you don't." Standing up, he tossed the crust back into the pizza box. "You don't have to be strong when you don't want to be or can't be." His voice went soft, understanding. "I know you can handle yourself out there when you have to. Hell, you do it better than I do sometimes. But you're sick, very sick..." He couldn't force the c-word past his throat.

"Mulder, it's important to me to do this. And while I appreciate your concern and Skinner's and St. George's; the decision is mine and mine alone to make." She stood in front of him, looking up defiantly. "You can't put me in a box and treat me like a china doll."

\_ \_

\_ "Scully..." \_

\_ "I'm really tired, Mulder." Dragging a hand over her face, she yawned. "How about we take this up again tomorrow?" \_

\_ The pale pasty colour on her face confirmed her words. Nodding, Mulder silently put the rest of the pizza in the kitchen and headed for the door. \_

\_ "Call me if you need anything." He said quietly as she began to close the door behind him. \_

\_ "I promise." \_

\_ "Anything." \_

\_ "I said, I promise." She smiled. "'Night, Mulder." \_

\_ \*\*\*\*\* \_

\_ In the darkness she could feel it pulsating behind her closed eyes; imagine it slowly growing and invading that which was Dana Katherine Scully. She could hear the strained breathing; feel the pounding of the blood as it continued to flow through her veins at least for a bit longer. \_

\_ God, she was scared. \_

\_ \*\*\*\*\* \_

\_ He lay on the couch, limbs sprawled out at awkward angles as he stared at the ceiling and waited for dawn. The familiar water stains and peeling paint didn't cover the nausea that rolled about in the pit of his being. Taking a deep breath, he wiped his eyes dry and turned to look at the glowing images on the television screen. \_

\_ \*\*\*\*\* \_

\_ She thrashed her way awake; restrained gently by another's arms. Gulping for air, she sighed and tried to forget the memories that haunted her dreams; of the deaths she had seen and expected to see. Stretching out a hand, she felt the cool metal of the revolver on the night table and shuddered. \_

\_ \*\*\*\*\* \_

\_ Opening the door, Marty stared at the young woman. "Yes?" \_

\_ "Oh, you must be Marty." She shook his hand lightly. "I've come to see Jackie. My name's Monica - I'm the home care worker with Dana."

\_

\_ "Ah..." Stepping aside to let her into the small apartment, the man paused. "Jackie's just getting dressed - but have a seat. Would you like some coffee?" \_

\_ The woman paused, then shook her head. "No, thank you." \_

\_ Passing by to pick up his own glass of pop, Marty glanced at her. Young, long dark red flowing hair over her shoulders, quite beautiful. Must be something wrong somewhere. \_

\_ "I'll be out in a second, wook." A voice called from the bedroom. "This blasted hair just bloody well won't braid and I don't think I have the patience for it today..." Striding out with the loose hair falling over one shoulder, she paused at seeing the woman seated on her couch. "Hello..." Her eyes went to Marty for an explanation. \_

\_ "Ah, this is Monica - Dana's worker. She just dropped by..." Marty shrugged. "I'll get your tea." \_

\_ "Okay..." Snapping the elastic around her hair and tossing it back in a ponytail, she stared at the woman. "I wasn't under the impression that nurses made visits to friends of their patients."

\_

\_ "Well, we usually don't." Monica smiled. "But Dana told me that she wanted to sleep in until ten; and we usually try to learn as much about the patient's friends to get all sides of the picture in relation to the illness." \_

\_ "And she gave you my name and apartment?" \_

\_ "She referred to you a lot. And that's usually a good sign of a close friend." \_

\_ "Right." Sitting down in the chair, St. George took the cup of tea from her fiancée and nodded. "So - what do you want to know?" \_

\_ "When do the two of you plan to get married?" \_

\_ Marty blinked. "That's relevant to Dana's care?" Putting a hand on Jackie's shoulder, he chuckled. "Maybe in a year or so. When things calm down enough and we're sure the time is right." \_

\_ "But when will you know?" The bright eyes searched the couple's. "I mean, from what Dana told me anything could happen..." \_

\_ St. George sat up straight, leaning forward. "Look, I'll talk to you about Dana and her sickness and what we can do to help her - I'm not going to let you dissect my relationship or..." She felt the calming hand on her shoulder pulling her back. \_

\_ "I worry." Marty admitted. "But she does what she does. It's a part of her that I can't cut out because it is what she is." \_

\_ "I see." Monica nodded. "Like Dana being a doctor and an agent?"  
\_

\_ "Probably." Jackie grudgingly admitted. "Although I think she should take it easy at times..." \_

\_ "But it's what she is." Monica repeated back. "And if she's going to continue doing her job, you have to respect that choice." \_

\_ "But I don't have to like it." She snapped at the woman. "Mulder doesn't like it; neither does Walter. And her mother..." Closing her eyes, the Canadian sat back. "She took it kinda badly." \_

\_ "Because Dana didn't tell her at first. Because she was afraid that her mother would try to protect her from the rest of the world, take her home with her and keep the rest of you away and what you do."  
\_

\_ "You don't know that." Jackie retorted. \_

\_ "But you think that's what she would have done." \_

\_ "Maybe." Jackie sighed. "So what did you want to talk about?" \_

\_ "What we just did." \_

\_ "I don't understand." \_

\_ "You will." Reaching over, Monica patted Jackie's knee as she got up. "Just think on it for a bit and then come over to visit her. She needs her friends." \_

\_ \*\*\*\*\* \_

\_ end of part one... \_

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## 2. Default Chapter Title

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Comments, complaints and just plain talk to [sheryl\\_martin@tvo.org](mailto:sheryl_martin@tvo.org)

Agents and Angels (2/3)(X Files/TBAA Crossover)by Sheryl Martin

"You're late, Agent Mulder." He flinched as he opened the door and heard the stern voice. Already it was turning out to be a bad day.

"Sorry. Had trouble getting up." An understatement, judging from his appearance. Tess sized him up; the loose tie and the ragged hair. He hadn't slept much last night, if at all.

"Sit down. You look terrible." Her voice took on a sympathetic tone that startled him. Wearily lowering himself into his chair, he watched as she sat opposite him, flipping open the red and white striped folder.

"Says here that when Agent Scully was abducted that you kept the file open for months on your own. Requested reports from all field offices; daily updates from overseas; everything." Closing it, she crossed her hands on her lap. "You really went the distance for her."

"She deserved it." Rubbing his face, he peered at the woman through his fingers. "She would have done it for me."

"You think so?"

"I know so." With a sigh Mulder leaned back in his chair. "Scully's bailed me out of enough situations that I know that she'd move heaven and earth to find me if I disappeared. She's done it before."

"I see." Tess looked at him. "And now you're afraid of losing her. Again."

"Aren't you supposed to be digging through my receipts or something?" The walls flew up between them silently.

"Part of my job is figuring out how important Agent Scully is to this section, Agent Mulder." She said quietly. "How important she is to you."

\*\*\*\*\*

Monica refilled her mug from the coffee pot and headed back into the living room; sitting down across from Dana. "This is wonderful coffee."

"Well, it's not espresso, but..." The redhead shrugged. "We do the best with what we have."

"Funny you should say that." She sung in that Irish lilt that caressed Dana's ears. "I spoke to Jackie this morning..."

The agent almost spat out a mouthful of coffee; wiping the small drops from her jeans and white blouse. "And she let you live? I thought that she'd rather die than talk to anyone who wasn't cleared to her satisfaction."

"Well, I spent more of it talking to Marty, to be honest." Monica laughed. "Talked about their wedding and what they were waiting for."

Dana frowned. "And he didn't kill you either. You must be special."

"You see, I pointed out to them that Jackie keeps putting herself in

danger despite the fact that she might not ever come back after a case and eventually marry him. And do that settling down thing and all."

"I'm not sure if I'm following you here..." Dana warned. "Of course Marty knew what she did when they met and when he proposed - and he knew she wouldn't give it up. Even if he asked, she might think about it, but it's too deep inside her - she couldn't quit."

"And that's true." Monica nodded. "But the same could be said for you."

Sitting back, Dana shook her head. "I'm not engaged."

"No, but you're very involved in the X Files. And you want to follow this through to the end."

Dana's head began to spin suddenly; a sharp pain shattering her thoughts. Putting the mug of coffee down, she closed her eyes. "I'm sorry - I can't think about this right now."

"Are you all right?" Monica was sitting beside her now, watching her intently. "Maybe you should lie down for a bit."

"Yes... just a bit of rest..." Getting to her feet, the redhead staggered down the hallway to her bedroom and disappeared.

"She's close." Monica turned at the unfamiliar voice. The tall blonde man smiled down at her.

"Andrew!" The welcome held an underlying tone of worry. "You're not here to..."

"No." He shook his head. "But she's been thinking a lot lately about Death, so I thought I'd check up on her myself - and then I found out that you and Tess were on the case, so I'm just hanging around."

"Does Tess know you're here?"

"Of course." He smiled. "Actually, I have some information for you on Dana." He sat down. "It seems that she's actually met us before..."

\*\*\*\*\*

"I'm really tired, Tess - can't we just call it a day and close up early?" Mulder was trying to be tactful; but the biting tone in his voice was evident.

"A few more minutes." She put the folder down atop the high stack of files sitting on the desk. Scully's desk, Mulder reminded himself. "It seems that most everything's in order here."

"Well, I could have told you that. Scully makes sure everything runs smoothly here - she's good at that."

"So what do you do for her?" Her eyes snatched at his.

"Uh..." He frowned, his eyebrows creasing in thought. "What do I do

for her?"

"Uh-huh." The older woman stared at him. "It seems to me that she does a lot here for you - keep your files straight; file the paperwork to keep the department functional and manages to even get the receipts in on time for the hotel reimbursements on your credit card. But what do you do for her in return?"

"I... ah..." Mulder's groggy mind searched frantically under the stern gaze. "She does it because she wants to. I mean, it's part of her job and all..."

"Oh, I see." Getting to her feet, the African-American towered over him. "So everything she does here is part of her job?"

"Well, not everything." He mumbled, feeling like he was a specimen under microscopic study. "I mean, she goes the extra distance a lot..."

"Why?"

"Because she wants to. Because she enjoys her job."

"And her job is..."

"To help me solve cases!" He exploded finally, all the tiredness and anger bursting out of him in a furious rage. "She's here because she's a damned good agent who wants to find the truth!"

"And what is the truth, Agent Mulder?" Tess said quietly, folding her hands in front of her.

He stared at her blankly. She shook her head from side to side slowly.

"The truth is that you're so afraid of losing her that you're willing to give up the search to save her, isn't it? And if you can't do that, you want to protect her and keep her safe for as long as you can."

Mulder felt like someone had peeled back the top of his mind and looked inside. He closed his eyes, willing the tears back.

When he opened them a few minutes later, she was gone.

\*\*\*\*\*

"But what do you mean, we can't reveal ourselves to her?" Monica sat outside Dana's apartment building in the red Cadillac; staring at Tess. Behind them, Andrew sat quietly.

Tess shook her head, speaking slowly; as if to a child. "I said that you can't just tell her that you're an angel. We've visited her before, and that's part of the deal."

"But we always tell..."

"Look, Miss Wings; I don't make the rules. And He says that you are not to tell anyone this time around." She raised her eyes up to the cloudy sky. "A little bit of enlightenment, please..."



"Dana met an angel when she was in intensive care and almost died." The blond man leaned forward between the two women, his voice soothing and low. "Owen was there."

"Owen? But..." Monica cut off her words as Tess raised a warning finger.

"At this point in her life it would be not in her best interests to actually meet an angel." Tess said calmly. "She's had enough encounters that you revealing yourself would distract her from her own inner revelations."

Monica still looked shocked. "But then how am I supposed to help her?"

"Well, I guess you'll just have to say more than 'Hi, I'm an Angel. And don't forget that we've intervened in less... concrete ways.'" Tess shrugged. "Part of the job is also knowing what not to say." She turned to the man in the back seat. "And you, Angel Boy - you better not start anything you're not here to finish."

He raised his hands. "Tess, I really just came by with the information for Monica. Honestly."

She snorted. "You might have thought that to start with, but I know it's more than that." Looking at her watch, the woman sighed. "One more day and then she's back to work. I think we better pick up the pace."

"I think so." A strange voice came from beside them. Monica's mouth hung open as she stared at Jackie.

She stood quietly by the red car, her jacket casually flipped open to reveal her revolver. "I think I deserve a few answers." A hand gestured at Andrew. "And the first one is - where have I met you before?"

\*\*\*\*\*

Dana lay on the bed, pacing her breathing as she tried to focus on the ceiling over her head. These attacks didn't last long; but she had told Monica to go home and leave her alone. And for once, the woman had agreed. All she needed right now was a little peace and quiet and to think about what Monica had said.

Or what she hadn't said.

God, she was afraid to die.

Not the real part; the soul leaving her body and all that. Because as she had said to Mulder when they had been in that dammed ship; slowly aging and close to death, she knew that they had nothing to fear. She knew that instinctively; more than he did. The fear in his eyes had disappeared as she stroked his wrinkled forehead, smiling as much as she could through cracked lips. And when he had lost consciousness, she had murmured a prayer for him; wanting to believe that he would walk the same road with her. Knowing that he would, in his own way. Mulder wasn't one to ever do anything the easy way.

But the method scared her. It was one thing to go quick and fast; hit by a car or shot in the head - another to slowly waste away until there was nothing left of her but a shell. She had worried about that after she had come out of the coma, thought about what would have happened to her if she had stayed alive after they had pulled the life support. Years of lying there, no escape or consciousness. Just floating.

Being with Mulder had brought so many revelations to her that they were hard to catalogue and remember; so many cracks in her carefully created wall of belief and faith. Faith in her government; her family; her own soul... Mulder had taken that fragile bubble and turned it upside down so the snowflakes twirled through the imaginary storm around the small figure inside; twisting in the wet winds. She had had to reevaluate so much of her life before this new danger.

She was tired. And scared. And so much wanted to believe.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mulder looked around the empty office, letting his breath out slowly. Tess had gone, and if he wanted to he could just close up shop and leave early. To go home and wade through the magazines and add to the files carefully stacked on his shelves. But he knew he wanted more than that tonight.

He wanted his partner.

He needed Scully.

Needed to hold her; to talk to her. Just to try and explain how scared he was and how helpless he felt and that he wouldn't ever fail her if he could.

Taking the car keys out of his pocket, he reached for his jacket.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Excuse me?" Andrew said politely from his position in the back seat. St. George shook her head.

"I've seen you somewhere..." Her attention shifted to the two women. "And you're the Tess who's been giving Mulder fits. Not that it's a bad thing, but..."

"But you want to know what relationship I have with Monica here and if we're endangering your friends." Tess finished the sentence calmly. "You do take your job seriously."

Jackie smiled. "Call it a habit."

Taking her hands off the steering wheel, Tess nodded. "A family trait, I'd call it. You've got the same gumption your great-great-great-grandfather had."

St. George chuckled. "And I'll assume you knew him personally."

Turning to stare at her, Tess nodded. "Actually, I did. And he was as much of a stubborn fool as you are."

A muscle twitched in the woman's face, but she didn't move from her spot beside the Cadillac.

"Andrew, why don't you take a walk with Jackie here." Tess's voice was calm but definitely authoritative. Without saying a word the tall man stepped out of the car. "We've got things to do - and don't worry about Marty - he'll stay in the car over there until you're finished." The car started up, rolling down the road sedately.

St. George looked at the man. "So... talk to me about who you and your friends are and what you're here for."

Clasping his hands in front of him, Andrew smiled. "You should know."

\*\*\*\*\*

Marty sat in the front seat of the car, watching them intently. Jackie had told him to stay back and to be ready to call for backup if she got into trouble.

He didn't tell her that he was her backup; as far as he was concerned.

Now she was standing there, talking to this guy while the two women drove off down the street; Monica and this other woman.

This was no way to spend his vacation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Walking into the garage, Mulder looked for his car and didn't see it. Grumbling quietly to himself, he walked over to the security guard.

"Where's my car?"

"Oh, Mr. Mulder..." The elderly man scratched the back of his head sheepishly, pushing the cap further up his head. "They had to tow it and the three cars on each side of it because they had a problem with one of the pipes." He gestured to the construction area. "They told me that they moved all of them outside and contacted you."

"Didn't contact me." Mulder grunted as he started the walk up the ramp towards the outside lot.

At the top he groaned again, seeing indeed, his car. With a flat tire. Somehow the attendants had managed to drag it over some broken glass while removing it and the jagged shard still stuck out of the tire. With a sound suspiciously between a curse and a cry, he opened the trunk and got out the tire iron.

"Agent Mulder." He looked up, blinking in astonishment at the red Cadillac filling his view. And driving it was Tess. "Having some problems today?"

He shrugged. "Just the usual bad luck." Rapping the tire iron on the

side of the car, he looked around at the snow still filling the Bureau's parking lot. "I was going to do some work before you got back from lunch."

"Oh, that's fine." She smiled. "Why don't I give you a lift?"

Mulder paused, weighing the cost. "I'm not coming back to work."

"That's fine." She swung the door open. "Neither am I."

\*\*\*\*\*

Scully lay in bed; the comforter pulled up high around her neck as she curled up in a small ball and dozed fitfully, her mind racing through the possibilities.

She was walking in a garden; her mother's garden at one of the homes they had had when she was little and they were typical Navy brats, travelling to a new base every year or so. Missy had loved this particular garden, working in the thick rich dirt to try and make the best flowers bloom. They had only been there a year; but the spring had been wonderful. The rose bushes had sprung forth in brilliant reds and whites; the other flowers paling in comparison but still as beautiful.

They had left it sadly; with Missy sternly extracting a promise from the new occupants to keep it just like that, her eyes flaming as she dutifully detailed every bit of information about the garden.

It was just as she remembered it. The fresh spring air drifted by; the slightest scent of the roses touching her senses.

"Hello, Dana."

She spun, expecting to see Missy. But instead she saw Monica. Dana frowned.

"Monica?"

"Well, I know you'd like to see your sister, but I'm here instead." Stepping forward, the woman smiled. "She did a wonderful job here."

"She took it personally." Dana stooped down by a rose bush; putting the newly-opened blossom to her nose. "She used to talk to them. We all laughed, but she said it helped them to grow."

"You must miss her a lot." Monica said softly.

"Every day." Standing back up, Dana looked around the small enclosure. "Mom does as well; but I keep thinking that it was supposed to be me instead of her. Now it doesn't matter much, does it?"

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I'm going to die anyway. Maybe in five years, maybe in ten. But there's no cure for this; not right now. And I know that we might

be able to hold this thing back; but we can't get rid of it totally. And I hate the way it rules my life." She kicked at a small stone in the path. "The way Mulder watches me sometimes... the way they worry over me - I might as well have died; the way they hover like I'm about to keel over."

"You don't mean that." Monica sat on the small wrought-iron bench. Dana shook her head.

"No, you're right. But it's so frustrating not to be able to do what I want - always knowing that they're watching me and thinking about what could happen; that I might just pass away in front of their eyes. And it's not from a gunshot or something tangible; this mass, this tumour - it's ruling my life and theirs."

"Because you let it."

"Mulder lets it. St. George lets it. Skinner lets it." The redhead sat down beside Monica with a sigh. "My mother insists that I call her once a day to tell her that I'm fine. And even if I'm feeling rotten, I lie to her. Because I can't stand to think of the pain she's going through."

"Seems that you've come to terms with your dying but not your living." Monica prompted. Dana stared at her.

"What?"

"You're strong and able to do your job. You can still get out there and go the distance with Mulder. Instead you worry about what they think about you and what limits they want to put on you. But you're putting the limits on yourself." Seeing the confusion in the agent's eyes, she continued. "You went into that sparring match knowing that you'd overextend yourself; push your limits. And then you were surprised that you were ill because of it. And then you were shocked at the reaction of those who care about you."

Tucking a lock of hair behind her ear, Dana stared at the ground. "I told Mulder in the hospital that I would beat this; and I still think I can. Sometimes. But the logical part of me is so strong to say that it's impossible, that I'm just fighting the incoming tide."

"You have to be strong for him as well as for yourself; that's true." Monica's voice flowed over her like honey. "But you have to have faith in your ability to fight this. Your logic might tell you one thing; but your heart tells you another."

"I have faith at times." Dana started. "But then I just get so mad; at Mulder, at the system... at God..." Her voice trailed off.

"Well, that's understandable." The woman rocked back and forth on the seat. "Most people see disease as being a curse from Him; a punishment on the unworthy or the unfaithful."

"I haven't thought much about that lately." The redhead confessed. "But I wonder if He's out there; and if He is what He must think."

"Dana, you once said 'What if God is talking and no one is

listening.'" The words shocked the agent into sitting up straight, staring at the woman beside her. "I'm here to tell you that He is listening, and watching - and wants you to know that He hasn't forgotten any of His children. Least of all Dana Katherine Scully."

Dana looked at her blankly; remembering that this was a dream.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Walk with me." Andrew tucked his hands into his coat and sauntered down the sidewalk. Casting a glance over her shoulder towards her car and the man inside, Jackie caught up in a few long strides.

"Are you working for the government? Why are you here?" She said in a low but threatening voice. "I don't know where those two went off to; but I warn you that if they hurt Dana or Fox..."

He stopped for a second and turned towards her. "You said you remembered me. Do you know from where?"

She shook her head, confusion evident on her face. "I don't know. But then, I've had enough hits on the head that I'm not surprised."

"I'm the Angel of Death." He said nonchalantly.

The Canadian stared at him for a minute and then broke into laughter. Standing stoically for a few minutes, he watched her regain her composure; wiping her eyes.

"Man, that's good. Did I mention that I double as the Easter Bunny on my days off?" She chortled.

Andrew smiled, letting a chuckle escape. "Look at me." He said softly.

Jackie took a deep breath and stared directly at him. Suddenly a glow enveloped him; running around the edges of his body and sending a shimmering through the air.

"Oh, my God..." She whispered.

"Exactly." He nodded. "And He doesn't want you to be the Easter Bunny."

\*\*\*\*\*

Marty frowned, tapping his fingers on the steering wheel. Jackie and that guy had walked along the wall, then stopped as he started to talk to her. And she looked terrified.

Time for backup.

Putting his hand on the car door, he went to get out and go to her.

\*\*\*\*\*

end of part two...

### 3. Default Chapter Title

All Characters copyright of TenThirteen Productions and Chris Carter.  
No infringement intended on any part... go ahead, take me to  
court...I'm using the insanity defence... heh, heh, heh...

Comments, complaints and just plain talk to [sheryl\\_martin@tvo.org](mailto:sheryl_martin@tvo.org)

Agents and Angels (3/3)(X Files/TBAA Crossover)by Sheryl Martin

"Agent Scully's place?" Tess drove along the street, easily avoiding the icy patches that appeared in the road.

"Uh-huh." Mulder sat quietly. "This is a nice car. You can't tell me you bought this on what the Bureau pays you."

She laughed. "I keep it for special occasions. Like this." Stopping at a red light, the woman turned towards him. "So what are you going to say to your partner?"

"Ah..." Mulder felt the walls inside him crack; the natural reluctance to let anyone into his thoughts vanish. "I just want to tell her that I can't stop worrying about her. But I know she has to keep working. She must keep working."

"And you?" She interrogated him like a master. The light turned green.

"I'll just... manage." He let out a heavy sigh. "But it's so hard when I see her working as hard as she can and trying to keep up; not fall back or expect any special attention because of the tumour. I just want to..." His hands curled up in his lap. "I just don't want her to die."

"I'm sure she feels the same way." Tess noted. "But you have to tell her that so she understands where you're coming from; what you expect from her. And what she expects from you." The car slid quietly up to the curb in front of the apartment house.

Mulder blinked. "Wha.... that was fast."

"It's a Caddy." She stroked the dashboard lovingly. "She's my baby. Now you go inside and do what you have to do."

"Right." Getting out the car, he bent down. "Ah... you better go. This could be a while."

She smiled. "I've got some errands to run."

\*\*\*\*\*

"I was there when your mother died. And your father." Andrew said quietly. "I was there when you killed that man the first time; and I've been here all the other times." He paused. "Not as often now, I

must admit."

"Are you..." She swallowed. "Here for Dana? Fox? Marty? Me?" Her hands dove into her jacket pockets.

"Don't do that." He warned her with a sad smile on his face.

Pulling her left hand out; she carefully put her palm against the wall beside them, feeling the tacks press against her hand. "I won't let you take them." Jackie growled. "You'll have to go through me first before you take any of them."

"Don't..."

She pressed hard against the stone; whimpering as the points ripped through her flesh and waiting for the rush of static to roar over her, the blood boiling in her veins.

Except nothing happened. Lifting her hand from the cold wall; she stared at the red liquid now running freely down her arm.

And slammed it against the wall again.

And again.

And again, until the pain was too much to take and she slumped down onto the sidewalk, holding her mangled hand as the tears broke free.

Kneeling down, Andrew shook his head. "Your Gift doesn't work for evil. You know that. When your ancestor made the Pact with the earth; with God, it was to be a protector and a helper. Not a destroyer."

She looked at him. "You've come for me?" The words hissed out through pained lips. "Because I've broken the Pact?"

"No. Not for any of you." Gently taking her hand, he pulled off the glove and dropped it on the ground. The gored and bloody palm stared up at him. "God wants you to know that He has faith in you and Fox and Dana; that you will do what you know is right and will succeed in the end."

"Will they?" She let out a groan as she tried to flex the fingers; feeling the torn tendons and muscles refuse to move.

"You know the answer to that." Gently pulling his palm down over the bloody mess, he clasped her hand. "And as for you - you're not the first St. George to have wandered off the path. But that's free will for you. And you've done a good job finding your way back."

He released her hand, revealing a flawless and unscarred palm. She let out a whimper mixed with a giggle at the sight.

"When your father first saw you, he was worried. The firstborn for decades had been a male; and now a woman. He was terrified of what you would have to do; what you would have to put up with. But he loved you. As did your mother." Standing up, he held out his hand to her. "Sometimes you have to walk close to Death to see what it means



to live."

She took his hand and stood up. "Now what happens?" Her mind spun with the words.

"Go home and know that nothing happens without His knowledge. And that He cares for all His children, including you." Andrew waved a hand towards the car behind them. "And spend your vacation doing something other than caring for your friends. They'll be fine." He smiled. "I think the two of you can manage that."

"Monica... Tess..." Jackie breathed out the names. "They're..."

He nodded. "But I'll assume you know you can't say anything."

St. George giggled. "Mulder's the crazy one in this group. Me, I'm..."

Marty put his hand on the door, opening it to get out. Turning his head to reach for the pistol on the passenger seat, he stopped.

Jackie sat there, her eyes closed.

He glanced out towards the wall; where he had seen the two people seconds before. Then back towards the woman at his side, slowly opening her eyes.

"Jackie?" He frowned, really confused this time.

She smiled at him, wiping her eyes. "Let's go home."

"But that guy... you wanted to check on Dana..." He sputtered. She shook her head, putting her left hand atop his leg.

"Home. And then I have a story to tell you." Reaching in her pocket, she withdrew the still-bloody glove. "And I think Dana's going to be all right."

\*\*\*\*\*

"You're an Angel from God, aren't you? Right." Dana looked around the garden. "The tumour must be causing hallucinations now." She let out a sigh. "Of course."

"Whether you believe in me or not isn't the point, now is it?" Monica's accented voice met her ears. "The point is that He believes in you and knows your fear and your pain. And that He wants you to know that He will be with you through this."

"And Mulder?" An uncharacteristic laugh broke free. "He doesn't believe in anything. If I tell him that I dreamt that God..."

"He believes in his own way, Dana." Putting her hand atop the agent's, Monica smiled. "But you have to realise that your life is much more important right now than planning for your death. And while it's fine to push your limits; pushing too far is just as bad as sitting back and waiting to die."

"Suicide's still a sin, I take it." Dana joked uncomfortably.

"Well, it's not really wanted. But not taking care of yourself is just as much a sin." Monica stood up. "He wants you to keep strong and keep fighting - and to know that He has plans for you that you can't know just yet."

"Will I die?" The words were forced out softly.

"Everyone dies, Dana." Monica let out a soft laugh. "But not everyone lives to their full potential. Live, Dana."

\*\*\*\*\*

Letting himself in with his key, Mulder paused in the front hallway. He couldn't hear anything - the home care worker must have left.

"Scully?" He called out hopefully, wishing that she had felt well enough to leave and go shopping or something like that. "Scully?"

Turning the corner, he poked his head into the bedroom and paused.

She was there.

All curled up in the blankets; fiery hair loose and tangled on the pillow. Her lips the slightest bit apart as if she were talking to someone.

He felt so intrusive he almost turned and left.

But he had come here to talk to her, and he'd be damned if he'd deal with this for another day.

Stepping inside the room, he sat on the edge of the bed; just watching her. Watching the blankets rise and fall with her steady breathing. Watching her live.

Mulder tangled his hands together; intertwining the fingers. "Ah... Scully..." Clearing his throat, he spoke softly; as if not to wake her but to still say the words.

"I was so scared when you told me about the tumour. So scared that they would somehow manage to take you away from me again. And that this time there was no chance of you being returned." A deep sign roared from his chest. "I went to Skinner; told him that I'd make a deal with Smoking Man for the cure - anything he wanted. The X Files, my badge - anything. Just to save you. Skinner said it wasn't worth it if I sold my soul to save you. He was right."

Stretching out a hand, he ran it along the blanket; down her side. "I didn't think about asking you. What you wanted. But I want you to be around for as long as you can, be by my side for the trip."

Shaking his head, Mulder continued. "I know I don't say it well, Scully... Hell, I don't do a lot of things by the book. But I need you to know that I do worry about you so much that it kills me to see you pushing yourself; pushing your limits to keep up with me and

trying so hard to make it look like nothing's wrong. That the nosebleeds are just an accident. That you're not tired from the driving, the plane rides. But it burns me up inside that I have to even watch you go."

"But I can't ask you to stay home. As much as I'd like to wrap you up in cotton and put you inside a glass box and keep you safe; that'd kill you faster than that dammed tumour."

"I guess I just need you to know that I'm with you in this fight; but I get scared at times. Scared that I'll have to go to work and see an empty desk one day; know that it'll be empty forever. Because there'd never be anyone else worthy enough to sit there. No one good enough for the hunt."

"But don't get mad at me or yourself when you falter; when you can't go the distance once or twice. I understand, and you've got to. Because I need you to live, Scully. To live through your work and with me; not to sit at home and die even though you're still breathing. I need you with me."

He stopped, his ragged breathing the only sound in the room.

"Mulder..."

The soft voice shocked him, and he dragged his eyes up to her face; seeing the deep eyes staring at him.

"Oh." He leapt off the bed quickly, embarrassed at being caught. "I thought you were... I mean, you were sleeping, and I..." The tall agent gestured at the door. "I let myself in, and..."

"Mulder..." Reaching out, she took his hand. "I'm coming back to work tomorrow. And I promise I'll be careful."

He felt the deep red flush cross his face; suddenly acutely aware of where he was. "Oh. Good. I think Tess is finished the audit anyway, and I've got some new files I want you to look at." Squeezing her hand one last time, he took a step backwards. "Ah... how about some dinner?"

"Chinese food sounds good." She smiled at him, making his heart skip a beat. "Let me get changed and I'll be out in a bit."

"Remember that old saying - 'may you live in interesting times'?" Mulder stood in the doorway, about to disappear from view. "I think it's more of a curse."

"Maybe." She rubbed her eyes. "But I think that live is the operative word here."

"Yah, well..." He stepped out of sight and down the hallway. "I'll call for the usual while you... whatever..."

Scully slowly got out of bed, reaching for the robe. It was time to wake up and get back to work.

\*\*\*\*\*

Tess stood in the corner of Scully's bedroom, nodding approvingly at Monica. "Not bad... not bad at all..."

"But was this what I was supposed to do? Just remind her that she has a duty to live?" Monica frowned. "It's so simple..."

"Of course it is. Which is why she forgot it. It's much easier to work yourself to the limit and then claim new boundaries on your limitations and sickness than to live within them and keep fighting." Tess gave a shake of her head. "We're outta here."

"But does she die? Of the tumour?"

Tess shrugged. "Free will. He created it, they use it. Or abuse it."

"Oh." The woman nodded. "They do make a nice couple..."

"Not my area. Nor yours." In a warning tone, Tess waved a finger. "Leave that up to them."

"Can I drive the car, then?"

Tess let out a groan.

\*\*\*\*\*How could we be able to forget those ancient myths that are at the beginning of all peoples, the myths about dragons that at the last moment turn into princesses; perhaps all the dragons of our lives are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave. Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest being something helpless that wants help from us...Ranier Maria Rilke\*\*\*\*\*

End  
file.